



U.S. Department of Labor

Women's Bureau



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Women's Bureau Mission

The Women's Bureau's mission is to improve the status of wage-earning women, improve their working conditions, increase their efficiency, and advance their opportunities for profitable employment.

Women's Bureau Vision

The Women's Bureau promotes 21st Century solutions to improve the status of working women and their families.



Workplace Flexibility



Creating Flexible Workplaces:

An Idea Whose Time Has Come!

The Women's Bureau hosted a conference, "Celebrating Flexible Workplaces: The Latest Research, Trends, and Innovations," in Phoenix, Arizona, on February 20, 2007.



Panel members with Shinae Chun, Women's Bureau Director, and Frances Jefferson, WB Regional Administrator (Denver). From left to right: Ellen Galinsky; Shinae Chun; Frances Jefferson; Dr. Carol Lewis; and Harvey Thomson. (Women's Bureau photo)

The conference featured a panel discussion by leading experts including **Ellen Galinsky**, President and Co-Founder, Families and Work Institute; **Dr. Carol Lewis**, Chair, City of Houston Planning Commission and Executive Advisor to Houston Mayor Bill White; **Donna Klein**, President and CEO, Corporate Voices for Working Families; and **Harvey Thomson**, Senior Consultant, The Business Opportunities for Leadership Diversity (BOLD) Initiative.

Ellen Galinsky presented her "Top 10 Reasons for Workplace Flexibility," such as increased employee job satisfaction, commitment, engagement, and retention.

Dr. Carol Lewis discussed "Flex in the City," a project of the City of Houston's Flexible

Workplace Initiative. Launched by Houston Mayor Bill White, this project challenged the city's leading employers to implement flexible work options as part of a two-week trial from September 18 to 29, 2006. One hundred forty-three organizations participated, with the possibility that more than 20,000 employees could eliminate peak-time commutes through telework, compressed work weeks, and/or flexible start and end times to daily work schedules. Employers measured

"Better Jobs, Better Earnings, Better Living"

the effects on productivity, while the City of Houston measured the effects on mobility.

Donna Klein discussed a Corporate Voices for Working Families' study of 28 companies addressing the issue of flexibility and how to measure it. The study concluded that workplace flexibility was a competitive advantage (good for the bottom line), not simply an accommodation to employee needs.

Harvey Thomson noted that the BOLD Initiative helps companies diversify leadership and gain a competitive advantage in the global economy. Workplace flexibility helps companies attract and retain diverse management talent.

Following the panel, participants engaged in roundtable discussions and shared ideas about the characteristics of today's workplace and the outlook for the future. Topics included barriers to achieving workplace flexibility and actions promoting growth of a flexible workplace culture.



Flex-Options Recognition Ceremony. From left to right: Michael Williams, Economist, Women's Bureau; Sue Rowland, Director of Adult Education, Delaware Area Career Center; WB Director Shinae Chun; WB Regional Administrator Nancy Chen (Chicago); and WB Regional Administrator Frances Jefferson (Denver). (Women's Bureau photo)

At the close of the conference, the Women's Bureau hosted a recognition ceremony and reception for attendees and employers participating in the Bureau's Flex-Options project. Since 2003, over 200 employers have participated. These forward-thinking men and women have established or enhanced over 600 workplace flexibility practices affecting over 300,000 employees.

The Women's Bureau encourages employers to create or expand flexible workplace policies and programs. For more information about the Flex-Options project or to participate in an upcoming teleconference, please visit the Women's Bureau Web site at www.dol.gov/wb/ or the Women Entrepreneurs, Inc. Web site at www.we-inc.org/flex.html. You can also email the Women's Bureau at WomensBureauNetwork@dol.gov.

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Statements of or attributions to private sector speakers or participants may not necessarily reflect Department views.

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